

Operator's Licence I N F O R M A T I O N

Motorcycles, Mopeds & Power Bikes

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE BASIC
LICENCE DRIVER'S HANDBOOK



**Think
& Drive**

SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU!



Alberta
TRANSPORTATION
AND UTILITIES



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INTRODUCTION



This handbook, along with the Basic Licence Driver's Handbook, gives the information you need to drive a motorcycle, moped or power bike and to obtain a Class 6 (motorcycle) licence.

The information in this handbook is not law or regulation so, if you need to understand a specific point of law look up the information in an official set of statutes.

You should study this handbook in preparation for your driver's examination. You should also read it regularly after you get your licence.

Always drive defensively. Bikers almost always come off second best in collisions with other vehicles. Remember, road safety is everyone's business.

Alberta Transportation and Utilities

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CHAPTER 1 Basic Information

MOTORCYCLE

A motorcycle is a motor vehicle mounted on two or three wheels. This includes scooters but not off-highway vehicles.

- You must have a Class 6 licence to operate a motorcycle.
- To learn you must:
 - be at least 16 years old;
 - have at least a Class 7 operator's licence;
 - have an instructor 18 years of age or older with a valid Class 6 licence either seated with you or following on another motorcycle or in another motor vehicle.
- Speed limits for motorcycles are the same as for passenger cars.
- You cannot carry a passenger on a motorcycle unless it is equipped with:
 - adequate passenger hand grips;
 - an adequate passenger seat;
 - adequate passenger footrests.

MOPED

A moped is a vehicle that:

- has no driver-operated clutch or gear box that transfers power to the driving wheel;
- an engine displacement of not more than 50 cc;
- can not go faster than 50 km/h on level ground;
- weighs more than 35 kg and less than 55 kg.

To operate a moped you must hold a valid operator's licence (any class). No special examination or endorsement is required.

POWER BICYCLE

A power bicycle is a vehicle that:

- has an engine displacement of not more than 50 cc;
- can not go faster than 35 km/h on level ground;
- weighs 35 kg or less;
- has no driver-operated clutch or gear box that transfers power to the driving wheel;

- is equipped with pedals that are always operable so that the vehicle may be propelled by muscle power.

To operate a power bicycle you must:

- be at least 12 years old and, if under 18, have parental (or guardian) consent or an operator's licence of any class. Consent forms are available at Alberta Registry offices.

No special examination or endorsement is required.

MOTORCYCLE LICENSING

Even if you hold another licence you must take a complete road test to obtain a Class 6 licence. A fee is charged for each test you take so make sure you prepare well for your examination.

You will be tested on your knowledge of safe-driving practices, motorcycles and the law. Questions will be based on this handbook and the basic Licence Driver's handbook. Please read both of them carefully.

You must provide a motorcycle for your road test. Road tests will not be conducted when road conditions or weather is poor.

The road test will include a:

- basic equipment check;
- skill test, usually conducted away from regular roadways. It includes a test of balance and control. You will be asked to weave between markers, ride slowly in a straight line, start on a hill, avoid obstructions, shift around curves, brake suddenly, ride in a circle and make left and right hand turns;
- road test, conducted on the street. It includes proper signalling and correct turns, correct use of traffic lanes, intersection judgement and speed control.

An examiner will conduct the road test by following the motorcyclist in another vehicle. The examiner will outline the directions in advance of the test.

Note: If you have a Class "7" licence, you will be required to complete the written, skills, and street tests.

If you have a class "5" licence or higher and if "on lot" testing facilities are available, you will be required to pass only the written and skills tests. Where these facilities are not available, your skills will be examined during the on-street test.

CHAPTER 2 Preparing to Ride

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BIKE

In choosing your bike consider what type of driving you plan to do. A small bike may lack the power required to maintain highway speeds and may be unstable at higher speeds.

On the other hand a bike that is too big may be difficult to control. If your bike is the right size you should be able to:

- have one foot flat on the ground as you straddle your upright bike;
- push, park and put your bike on its stand without straining;
- comfortably reach and operate all controls without straining or stretching.
- push the bike through a figure 8
- lift the bike by the handlebars when it is lying on its side (lock front wheel when lifting if possible).

Know what type of driving you plan to do and make sure you choose a motorcycle that is designed for that purpose.

THE DRIVER

Know your bike well enough so that you can find and use switches and the controls without taking your eyes off the road. This is particularly true of the turn signals, horn, dimmer switch, choke, motor cutoff switch and fuel control valve.

Make sure your bike is in good mechanical repair before every ride. Before you ride check your bike's controls. Be sure you know the gear pattern. Work the throttle, clutch and brakes a few times before you start. Ride with extra care until you are used to the way your bike handles. Slow down on corners and give yourself extra stopping distance.

Unlike the driver of a car you have no seat belt or metal box around you for protection in a collision. Always drive with extreme care.

Never ride after drinking alcohol or taking drugs (including many prescription and over-the-counter drugs). These may affect your reactions and judgement. Do not drive when you are tired. Avoid becoming dehydrated.

OUTFITTING THE DRIVER

Wear Proper Clothing

Protect your skin and eyes from the sun, wind, bugs and debris. Leather is best but heavy nylon or denim jackets and long pants are acceptable. Do not let flaps, laces or anything else dangle from your clothing. Do not wear clothing that may flap or balloon in the wind as this may tire you or prove distracting. Wear gloves and other clothing which is designed for motorcycle use. Always wear sturdy footwear which covers the whole foot and ankle.

Always Wear a Helmet

Helmets approved for motorcycle use are required by law in Alberta and must be worn by the driver and passenger. Helmets should fit correctly, snug enough so that they do not slip around your head with the chin strap done up. Make sure your helmet meets Alberta standards before you buy. Replace helmets that have been dropped, scraped or damaged in a collision. Use only soap and water to clean your helmet.

Always Wear Boots

Do not wear shoes that are loose fitting or which have rings or laces that may catch on controls. Leather or heavy nylon boots are best. They should be sturdy and high enough to protect your ankles. Their soles should be made of hard material and should have a pronounced tread pattern. Wear footwear that allows you to properly operate the foot controls.

Protect Your Eyes

Wind and rain can tire your eyes and blur your vision. Dust, bugs and debris can hurt your eyes and cause you to lose control of your bike. Windshields help deflect wind, rain and flying objects but do not protect the eyes so wear eye protection even behind a windshield.

Your eye protection should:

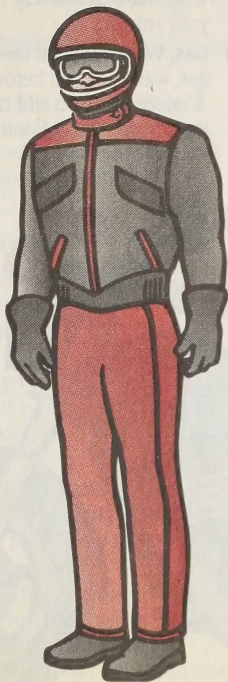
- be free of scratches;
- allow clear vision on both sides;
- allow room for eyeglasses, sunglasses or safety glasses;
- be securely fastened;
- be made of shatterproof material.

Be Seen

For a biker being seen may be the difference between life and death. Wear bright colours such as orange, red or yellow. Fluorescent colours are especially good. Reflective tape on your bike, helmet and jacket is a good idea, too.

Wear Gloves

Gloves keep your hands warm and give you a better grip on the controls. Gloves specifically designed for use on motorcycles are best.



BIKE CHECK

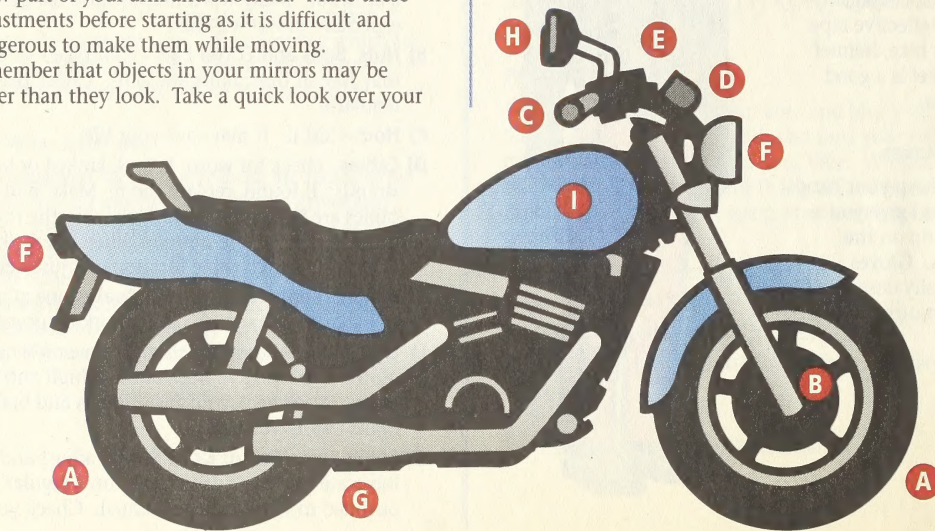
- A) **Tires** - be sure that your tires are properly inflated. Use an air pressure gauge to check pressure in both tires every day before you ride. High or low tire pressure may cause improper handling. Always check the tires for tread wear. Never ride on tires that show cracks, cuts or bulges which could cause a blowout. Badly worn tires are also dangerous, especially in wet weather.
- B) **Nuts, Bolts and Cotter Pins** - your bike's vibrations may loosen nuts, bolts and pins. Check them regularly.
- C) **Horn** - test it. It may save your life.
- D) **Cables** - check for worn, frayed, kinked or broken strands. If found, replace them. Make sure all cables are well lubricated. Make sure the throttle cable returns to idle position when released. Check the clutch cable for proper adjustment.
- E) **Brakes** - apply front and rear brakes one at a time to make sure that each one is working properly.
- F) **Lights** - your headlight should come on when the motor is running. Check both its high and low beam. Also check your turn signals and brake lights before you ride.
- G) **Chain, Drive Belt or Drive Shaft** - adjust and lubricate the bike's drive chain on a regular basis as outlined in your owner's manual. Check your

owner's manual for proper adjustment of drive belt. If your bike has a drive shaft check its oil level(s) regularly.

- H) Mirrors** - keep your mirrors clean. Each mirror should allow you to see about half of the lane behind you and as much as possible of the lane beside you. When properly adjusted a mirror may show part of your arm and shoulder. Make these adjustments before starting as it is difficult and dangerous to make them while moving. Remember that objects in your mirrors may be closer than they look. Take a quick look over your

shoulder before every turn. Never rely entirely on your mirrors.

- I) Gas, Water and Oil Levels** - check the levels of your gas, water and oil before starting. Check for leaks. A seized motor could cause your rear wheel to lock and cause a loss of control.



CHAPTER 3 Keeping Control

A motorcycle is a unique vehicle. It requires both skill and balance from its rider if it is to be driven safely. Only practice can teach you everything that is needed but here are a few tips that may help you.

POSITION OF THE DRIVER

- **Seat-** sit far enough forward so that your arms are slightly bent when you hold the handle grips. This will allow you to turn the handlebars without stretching.
- **Hands-** hold the handle grips lightly but firmly and use the “wrist down” method which will help you from accidentally using too much throttle (see diagram).
- **Balance-** to help you keep your balance during turns, hold your knees firmly against the gas tank and look in the direction that you want to go. Do not look down.
- **Feet-** should be firmly on the footrests at all times when the motorcycle is moving. Keep your toes up. If they drop down they may get caught between the road and the footrest. You need your

feet for effective braking and gear selection, so be sure to keep them near those controls at all times.

- **Starting Off-** starting and stopping are two areas where control can easily be lost. It is best for beginners to practice starts and stops in a safe, traffic-free area until these skills have been mastered. Smooth coordination is required between clutch and throttle. Too much throttle can cause you to lose control, too little will cause the engine to stall.



Before Starting Out Check the Following:

- front wheel not locked;
- rear-view mirror adjustment;
- gas turned on;
- engine warmed up and running smoothly;
- lights are on.

Take the bike off the stand before allowing passengers to get on. Always check your footing before taking the bike off the stand.

Make Sure Way Is Clear of:

- children;
- pedestrians;
- other traffic;
- any obstacle.

Before you pull away make sure it is safe.

- Use your rear-view mirror but don't rely on it exclusively. Look over both shoulders to check the spots you can't see in the mirror.
- Make sure traffic sees you. Many car drivers have trouble seeing motorcycles and may pull out in front of you. Most car drivers involved in a collision with a motorcycle say they never saw it. Use your signals and yield to other traffic when entering the traffic flow.

STARTING ON A HILL

It is more difficult to get a motorcycle moving on an upgrade than it is on flat ground. There is a greater danger of rolling backward into someone behind you or stalling the motor. Here is the best way to do it.

1. Use the front brake to hold the motorcycle while you start the engine and shift into first gear.
2. Change to the foot brake to hold the cycle while you operate the throttle with your right hand.
3. Open the throttle a little bit for more power.
4. Slowly release the clutch and rear brake as you apply more power with the throttle. If you release it too quickly the front wheel may come off the ground or the engine may stall.
5. Release the foot brake when the engine begins to slow down as the clutch takes hold.

SHIFTING GEARS

Smooth and timely gear shifting takes practice but, once learned, it will reduce wear on your motorcycle and help you maintain control.

Your owner's manual will tell you the maximum speed for each gear. Remember, always be in the correct gear for the speed at which you are travelling, whether you're speeding up or slowing down.

There is more to shifting gears than simply getting the motorcycle to accelerate smoothly. Loss of control or collisions occur if the gears are used incorrectly when downshifting, turning or on hills.

Downshifting

Downshifting can be more difficult to do smoothly than upshifting. Here is how to do it:

- close the throttle;
- squeeze the clutch lever and open the throttle slightly, with a firm positive motion push down the gear-change pedal as far as it will go and release it;
- release the clutch lever fully but gradually as you apply more throttle to match the engine speed for the desired speed of travel.

It is important to shift down through all the gears as you slow down or stop. This way you always have enough power to accelerate quickly if required.

Make certain you are going slowly enough when you shift into a lower gear. If you are going too fast the motorcycle will lurch and the rear wheel may lock. This is even more likely to happen while you are going downhill or shifting into first gear. Under those conditions you may need to use the brakes in order to slow down enough to shift safely.

Shifting in a Turn

Do not shift gears in a turn except in an emergency. A sudden change in power to the rear wheel can cause it to lock or spin, creating a skid. It is best to shift gears before entering a turn.

URNS AND CORNERS

There are two ways to turn a motorcycle, depending on the speed. When driving less than 20 km/h a motorcycle can be steered by turning the front wheel in the direction you want to go. This requires good balance and coordination between the clutch and the throttle. Practice doing this in a safe, traffic-free area.

At speeds greater than 20 km/h you must lean with the motorcycle and master the skill called counter-steering or push-steering. As you turn a corner at higher speeds your motorcycle is pushed outward by centrifugal force. To counter this outward push you must lean inward. The greater the speed the more you must lean. Many motorcyclists, especially inexperienced ones, misjudge their speeds and attempt to corner too fast. Slow down before you reach the corner. Look through the corner in the direction in which you are turning.

To produce your inward lean push forward on your handlebar on the side towards which you want to turn. In other words push forward on the handlebar with your right hand in order to turn right. Push forward with your left hand in order to turn left.

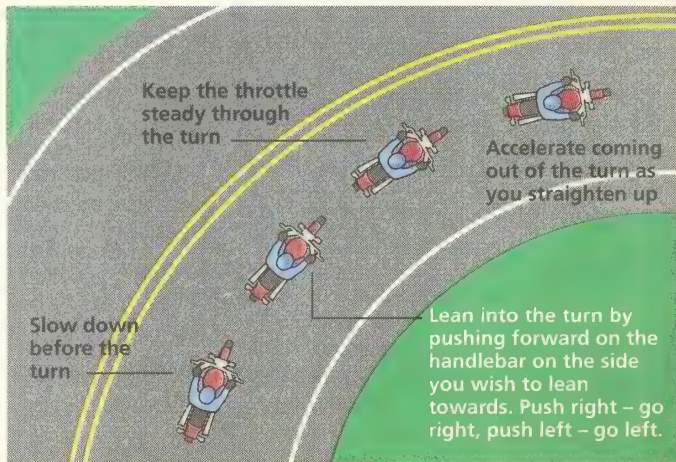
As the bike begins to lean you will automatically turn the handlebars in the direction of the lean. This technique is helpful in everyday situations and in avoiding debris, potholes and collisions.

Use a light but firm grip on the handlebars for all turns.

When Cornering:

- Reduce speed as you approach the curve. Slow down even more when road or weather conditions are poor;
- Rather than looking at one spot or immediately in front of your bike turn your head and keep your eyes level so as to look through the turn to where you want to go;
- If you brake or downshift do it before the turn;

- Lean in the direction of the turn.
- Gradually roll on the throttle through the turn. Maintain a steady speed or accelerate gradually. Avoid slowing down while in the turn;
- Accelerate slightly and use push-steering to straighten the bike as you come out of the turn.



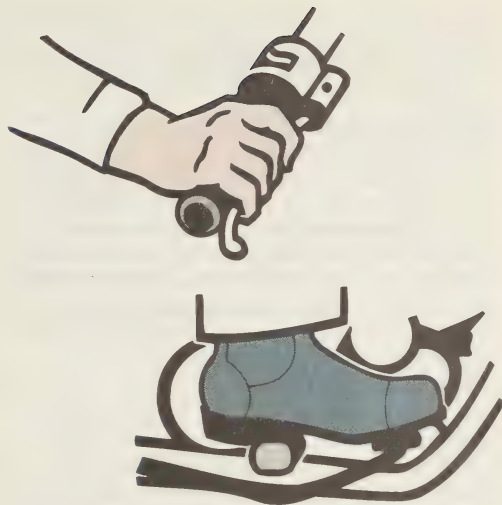
BRAKING AND STOPPING

Most motorcycles have two brakes, which are operated independently. When stopping use both front and rear brakes, applying both at the same time. The front brake provides about 75% of your bike's braking power and should be used in most circumstances. However, at low speeds use of the front brake may cause a fall.

Some motorcycles have been equipped with integrated braking systems that link front and rear brake operation together. Anti-lock brake systems are also available on some models. If your bike has either one of these systems check your owner's manual for instructions on the best way to use your brakes.

Here are some braking tips:

- Downshifting as you brake will allow you to use the engine compression as a brake, as well;
- Use extra caution when braking in a turn, with the front wheel turned or on slippery or rough roads. For maximum braking in a curve, straighten the bike to the upright position, straighten or square the handlebars before firmly applying both brakes;
- Practice controlled stops in a safe, traffic-free area;
- Learn to apply even braking and acquire a feeling for when your wheels are about to lock up;



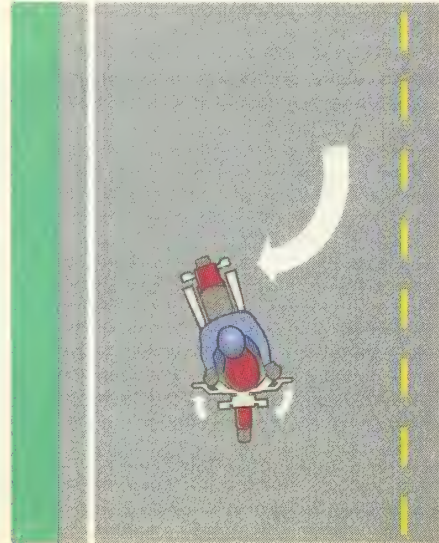
- You can brake in a turn by applying both brakes but use caution. Take care not to lock either wheel especially on slippery road surfaces;
- Remain in first gear while you are stopped so you can move out quickly if necessary. Keep at least one brake firmly applied while you are stopped in case the clutch becomes engaged by mistake;

- Never ride with your brake partially applied. It turns on your brake light which confuses other drivers and causes unnecessary wear on your brakes;
- It is important that you stay aware of what is behind you by checking your mirrors often. Leave plenty of space, at least two seconds between you and the vehicle ahead. Not only will this help you avoid a collision with the vehicle in front it will also help you drive more smoothly and save you from sudden stops which could get you rear-ended;
- For emergency braking use both brakes to the maximum effort but do not lock the wheels. Over-braking one, or both, wheels is one of the most common causes of skidding;
- Apply the front brake fully. If it locks release the brake immediately. At the same time press down on the rear brake. If it accidentally locks keep it locked until you have stopped completely. If your motorcycle is upright and moving in a straight line you can still control it even if the rear wheel locks. If the skid is caused by over-acceleration ease up on the throttle. Steer in the direction you want the front of the bike to go.
- Avoid sudden braking on loose sand or gravel, slippery roads, painted or metal surfaces, or on wet roads, especially during the first few minutes of rain.

SKIDS

Most skids are the result of driver error such as:

- Turning too sharply or at too great a speed;
- Braking too hard, usually the rear wheel;
- Accelerating too fast.



These driver errors are made even worse by poor road conditions such as slippery surfaces or loose sand or gravel. The best way out of a skid is **not to get into one**. Plan ahead so that you will not be forced to make rapid movements. If you are not familiar with the road, drive slower.

If you do get into a skid, don't panic. If handled properly, you may be able to get out of difficulty.

When a slight rear wheel skid is caused by over braking, it can be corrected by steering in the direction of the skid and slowly letting up on the brake.

The proper method of correcting a skid is explained in the previous section under the heading **Braking and Stopping**.

PARKING

Park where it is safe and legal. Signs, curb markings and common sense will tell you if you can park.

Your motorcycle may have a centre stand, a side stand or both. These are usually operated from the driver's left side. You should, therefore, make a habit of dismounting to your left.

When leaving your bike parked make sure the transmission is in first gear, the front wheel is locked and the ignition key is removed.

Try to avoid parking your bike on a hill.

CHAPTER 4 Road and Lane Positions

Many motorists do not expect, or see, motorcycles sharing the same roadway with them. Although a collision may be their fault that won't help the cyclist who, almost always, will wind up on the short end of any crash.

Protect Yourself! Be Seen!

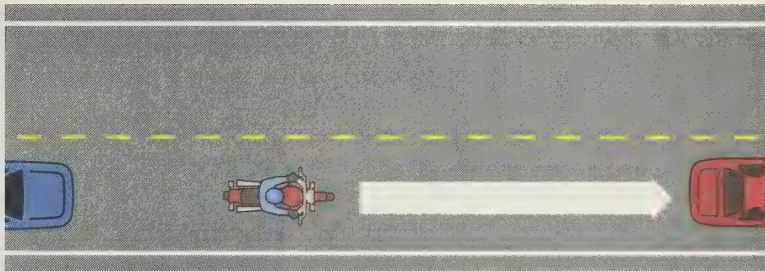
WHERE TO DRIVE IN TRAFFIC

One of the ways for you to be seen is to know and use the correct road position for every situation. While there is no single position that is best, the following is good positioning advice.

Maintaining a Space Cushion

- Avoid remaining beside other moving vehicles. They may suddenly change lanes by moving into your lane.
- **Keep your distance.** The closer you follow another vehicle, the greater the risk to you. The best protection you can have is the distance between yourself and others. Distance provides three advantages:
 - Time to react so that you don't hit anything or anyone.
 - Some place to go should the unexpected happen.
 - The ability to avoid panic stops which could cause you to be rear-ended.
- Stay at least two seconds behind the vehicle ahead. At higher speeds, or when road conditions are not perfect, stay even further behind.
- If the vehicle behind you is following you too close, increase your following distance for this will allow you to stop more gradually and may save you from being rear-ended.

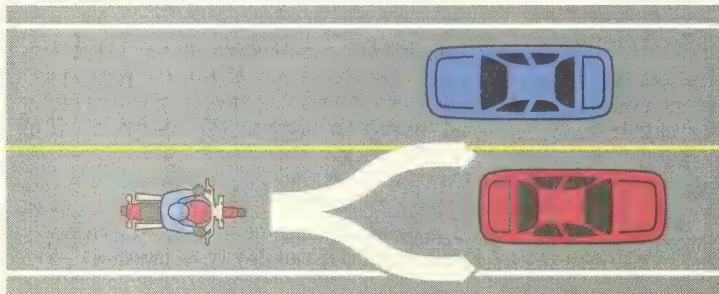
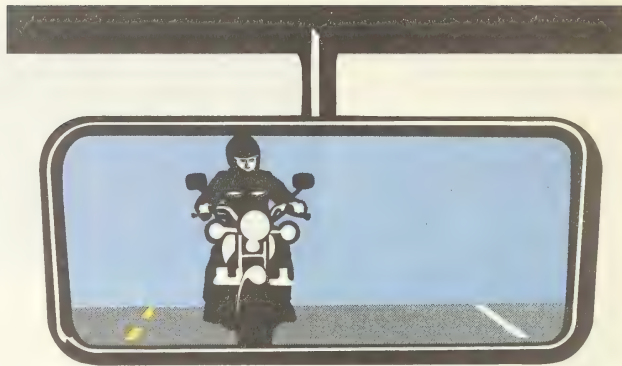
Use your mirror(s) to keep track of vehicles which you already know are behind you. If you follow too closely, drivers of oncoming vehicles can not see you.



- Remember that speed limits are posted as the maximum speed limit. If conditions are not ideal, slow down.
- Experienced riders know that they must constantly adjust and readjust their lane positions depending upon changing traffic conditions. The left track of an automobile is often recommended as the best place to ride because:
 - You avoid the oil slick formed in the centre of the lane by drippings from other vehicles.
 - You can see oncoming vehicles more easily.
 - Oncoming drivers can see you more easily.
 - You use the full lane you are entitled to, discouraging motorists from trying to share your lane.

- You can see farther into (and be more easily seen from) road junctions on the right.
- These are the advantages most of the time, but there are many times when it is smarter to use the centre or right portion of the lane in order to expand your space cushion.
- When following another vehicle, stay out of the other driver's blind spot. Ride where you can be seen clearly in the other vehicle's rear view mirror. Stay well back so that you will be better seen. This will also give you more time to react to unexpected actions of others and to road hazards such as potholes and debris.
- Be prepared to sound your horn if necessary to make other drivers aware of your presence.

- Always assume the other drivers around you do not know you are there. Try to foresee what other drivers may do and plan ahead what you will do to avoid them.
- Drive in a lane position that clearly establishes your space. Do not hug the centre line or the curb as it may tempt other drivers to drive into the lane beside you.
- Do not try to share a lane with other drivers, not even to get around a line of stopped traffic. You will not be expected and you could be seriously hurt.



- Be extremely careful when driving beside other traffic. You may not be seen and the other driver might make a sudden shift into your lane. Be sure you are where the other driver has the best chance to see you. Stay out of the other driver's blind spot.

Don't try to pass by squeezing past cars in your lane.

INTERSECTIONS

Most collisions involving motorcycles happen at intersections. The two main causes of collisions at intersections are:

- oncoming vehicles making a left turn in front of a motorcycle;
- vehicles entering from a side street.

To avoid collisions:

- give yourself lots of room;
- always slow down before entering an intersection, even if other traffic is required to yield to you.
- be prepared to stop;

Slow down and be ready to position yourself in the left or right of your lane, whichever will give you the most room.

If an oncoming driver wants to turn left slow down and move to the right of your lane. If a car can enter your path, assume it will!

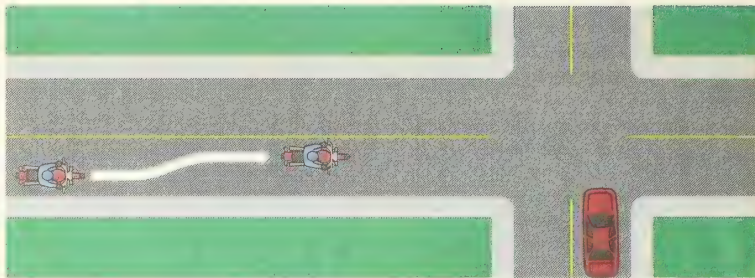
- always check your rear-view mirror so you know how much time you have from behind;
- be prepared to move to either side of your lane, whichever will give you the most room.

Do not assume you have been seen until you get some recognition from the driver.

If you stall in the intersection and cannot start your bike, walk the bike clear of all traffic and out of the intersection. Put on your four-way flashers if the bike is so equipped.



If a car is about to enter from the right side of the intersection move to the left of your lane and be prepared to stop. If a car can enter your path assume that it will!



If you have traffic about to enter the intersection from both sides, stay to the left of your lane. Be prepared to stop! If a car can enter your path assume that it will!

CHANGING LANES

There is always some risk involved when changing lanes and it's up to you to do it safely. Avoid unnecessary lane changes. Don't be a lane hopper. The few seconds you might save by constantly switching lanes is not worth the risks involved. Plan ahead as you drive so that you are not trapped into making sudden lane changes.

When changing from one lane to another:

- make sure a lane change is permitted;
- check traffic ahead and use your mirrors to check traffic behind you;
- because mirrors have blind spots, always look back quickly over your shoulder to the lane into which you will be moving;

Slow down when being passed, if necessary, but don't move immediately to the right as it may encourage the other driver to try and share your lane.

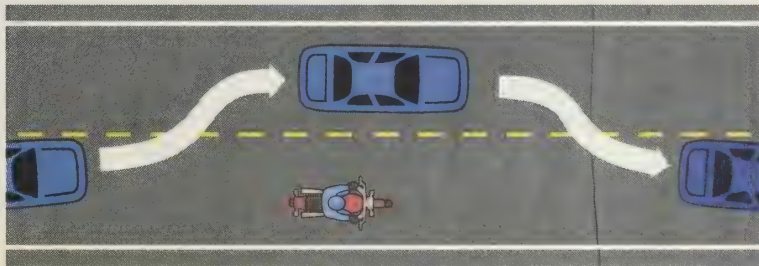
Once the vehicle starts to pass, be prepared to slow down and move to the right if necessary. Return to your normal lane position after the pass is completed.

- give proper signal;
- look again and, if it is safe, make the lane change.

BEING PASSED

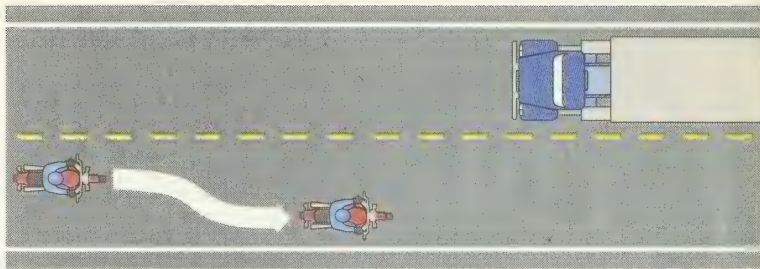
Cooperate if someone is passing you. It is illegal and dangerous to speed up when you are being passed. Slow down, if necessary, to make sure the passing vehicle has room to move in safely.

Be careful when a large vehicle is coming toward you. It can block a strong crosswind or create a pull of its own which may cause you to lose control.



When being approached by a large vehicle stay alert and keep a firm grip on your handlebars.

Move to the right of your lane and be prepared for turbulence or a change in wind conditions.



PASSING

Passing another vehicle looks easy but there is always risk involved. Don't pass unless it is necessary. Ask yourself, "What will I gain?" If it is necessary to pass, however, be sure you are passing in a legal passing zone and make sure it is safe.

Do **not** pass;

- near the crest of a hill;
- within an intersection;
- at a railway crossing;
- on a curve or any place where your view ahead is obstructed;
- on the shoulder of the road;
- when the traffic in front of you is slowing down for an unknown reason.
- a vehicle that has stopped for a pedestrian.

When passing:

- check your rear-view mirror;
- always take a quick look over your shoulder into the lane into which you will be moving;
- signal;
- look ahead for oncoming traffic;
- check over your shoulder one more time and then, if safe, go ahead.

After passing a vehicle make sure it is visible in your rear-view mirror, check over your shoulder, signal, allow a sufficient space cushion and move back into your travel lane when it is safe to do so.

It is illegal to go over the speed limit when passing another vehicle.

CHAPTER 5 Carrying Passengers

You should not carry a passenger until you become experienced in the operation of a motorcycle. The extra weight changes the way a motorcycle handles, the way it turns, speeds up and slows down. You are legally responsible for your passenger's safety.

- The person behind you should sit as far forward as possible without crowding you.
- Make sure your passenger understands that they must sit still, especially when you are manoeuvring your bike.
- You must have a proper seat and foot pegs that allow the passenger to sit behind you without moving you from your normal position.
- A passenger should have the same type of protective equipment, eye protection and clothing as the driver.
- Be sure your passenger knows what is expected of them before you start out.
- Tell your passenger never to get on or off the bike without asking you first.
- **Both passenger and driver are required by law to wear approved helmets.**

- Allow first-time passengers to get used to riding by first taking them out at slow speeds in light traffic situations.

ADJUSTING TO PASSENGER'S WEIGHT

To adjust for added weight of a passenger, you should:

- Operate at a slower speed, particularly on corners, curves, or bumps.
- Begin to slow down earlier than usual when you approach a stop.
- Allow a greater following distance.
- Look for the large gaps whenever you cross, enter or merge with traffic.
- **Before you make any new move, be sure to warn your passenger so that there are no surprises.**

Sudden movements can make your bike difficult to control. Your passenger should always move when you do: leaning forward when you speed up and leaning back when you slow down and to the side when you are making a turn. Make sure your passenger uses the hand grip properly.

To allow for the extra weight of the passenger adjust the shock absorbers and check the slack in the drive chain.

Both your passenger's feet should stay on the foot pegs, even when stopped. Hot pipes and mufflers are a major hazard for passengers.



Only you, and not your passenger, should make hand signals.

Make sure your passenger is wearing proper protective gear (including helmet).

Make sure your bike is built for carrying a passenger. Check your owner's manual to see if you need to adjust the amount of air pressure in your tires. Your passenger should sit as far forward as possible without crowding you. Make sure your passengers know that they must sit still. You must have a proper seat and foot pegs for your passengers.

CHAPTER 6 Group Riding

Group riding is acceptable but you have no special rights on the road.

Select an experienced leader and put inexperienced riders behind the leader.

Be considerate by limiting the size of your group to four or five bikes. If you have more drivers than that, break into two or more smaller groups.

Never ride side by side. If you do it in the same lane it is illegal and, if you do it in separate lanes, it may

impede traffic and limit your ability to manoeuvre in an emergency.

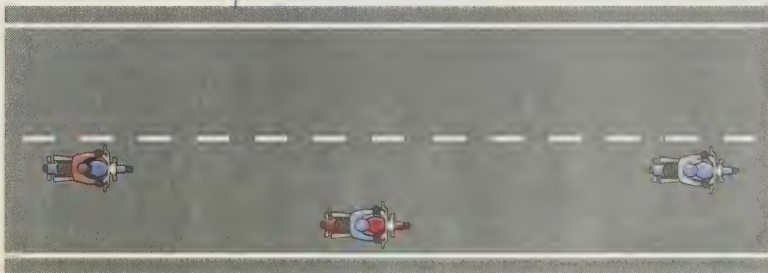
Use the two-second following rule. Keep a safe distance between bikes.

Plan ahead. Make sure everyone knows the route.

Let the last bike set the pace. No one should have to race to keep up. Use your mirrors to keep an eye on the bike behind you.

Any group of motorcycles is best riding in a staggered formation, with the lead and last riders in the left side of the lane.

Put the inexperienced riders behind the leader – there they are less likely to get confused. Watch your mirrors and set your speed according to the motorcycle behind you. It's the best way to stay together.



CHAPTER 7 Riding Under Difficult Conditions

HAZARD AWARENESS

Anticipation is the best way to avoid a dangerous situation. If you can recognize and prepare for a dangerous situation before it becomes unavoidable you can plan your escape in time. Stay fully aware of what is going on around you and adjust accordingly. When you see a potential danger, slow down and plan a course of action that allows for the unexpected.

For instance, if children are playing near the street, plan what you will do if one runs out. If cars are approaching from either side at an intersection and one is not yielding, be prepared to react. Know how to proceed when you hear a train whistle sound as you approach a railroad crossing. Understand what it means to you and your bike when the road ahead of you changes from pavement to loose gravel.

These are only a few cases that could put you or someone else in a dangerous situation. In your plan of action, you must not only consider the danger you have seen but any additional danger that may be created while trying to avoid the first problem. For example you must know how close the car is behind

you before you brake suddenly. You must know what is developing in all directions around you.

RIDING AT NIGHT

There is a greater risk of being in a collision when driving at night. Even with the best lights, you cannot see or be seen clearly. To drive safely, you should:

- Cut your speed at night to below daytime speed.
- Allow more distance when following another vehicle. Give yourself more time to react. Keep a following distance of three or four seconds.
- Signal earlier and brake sooner.
- Don't pass unless it's necessary.
- Make sure you can stop in time for any sudden obstruction within the range of your headlight(s). Don't overdrive your headlight(s).
- Stay alert. Everything is harder to see at night. If you are sleepy, stop.
- Keep your goggles, face shield and your windshield clean. If they're badly scratched, replace them. At night use only clear, untinted lenses.

- Make sure you're visible. Clean your lights and reflectors if they're dirty. Wear bright colours. Add reflective tape where it will do the most good. A reflective vest is ideal.
- Be alert for animals which can jump out of ditches to cross the road. Scan the roadside far ahead and look for movements or the reflection of an animal's eyes.



Keep your goggles, face shield and windshield clean.

Wear bright reflective tape.

RIDING WHEN THE WEATHER IS POOR

Take the same precautions you would as when you are riding at night. When you are faced with poor weather at night, use extra care when braking or accelerating.

You will not see many bikes on winter roads. It is too dangerous and uncomfortable. Think twice before you ride in any poor weather.



Your high beam may only illuminate the snow, smoke, etc., which is in the air, blinding you. Should this happen, use your low beam

RIDING ON DANGEROUS SURFACES

Surfaces such as wet pavement, gravel roads, mud, snow, ice, painted lane markings and steel surfaces (utility hole covers) should be avoided if at all possible. If you cannot avoid these surfaces:

- Slow down.
- Keep your arms and wrists loose and your feet on the pegs.
- Use your brakes smoothly and gently.
- Avoid sudden moves. You should turn, brake, accelerate and change gears as little and as gradually as possible.
- Release the clutch smoothly when shifting gears.

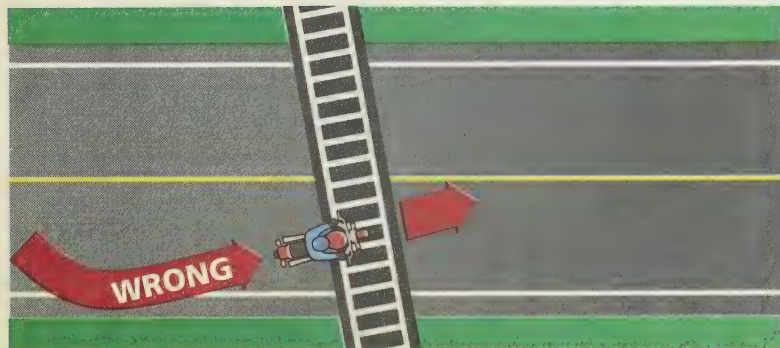
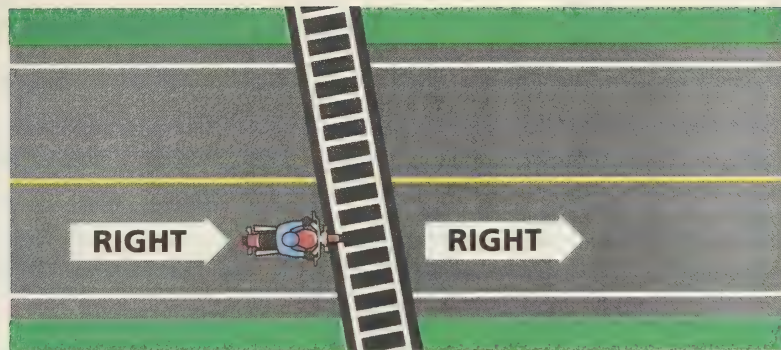
Loose material on a paved road is as dangerous as a slippery road.

- Slow down and ride with care. Gravel and sand surfaces may be less dangerous if you slow to a moderate speed.
- Maintain a relaxed but firm grip on the handlebars.
- If the front wheel weaves a little, let it. Keep your arms and wrists loose and keep your feet on the pegs.
- Avoid fast stops if possible.

When crossing a rough surface, try to meet the obstacles head on if possible. Some road surfaces such as bridge decks are made of metal gratings. Your bike will vibrate and wander slightly as it crosses the grating. Don't fight it. It is usually not dangerous if you slow down in advance and maintain a constant speed.

Caution: Oil from cars and trucks usually builds up in the centre of the lane. To avoid this danger drive in the track made by the left tires of other vehicles and use extreme care and good judgement.

When crossing railroad tracks that are at an angle to the highway, it is advisable to slow down before the tracks and to cross them by proceeding straight ahead.



AVOIDING OBSTACLES

A quick stop may not be enough to keep you from hitting something in your path. If a piece of debris or a pothole appears suddenly in your path, sometimes the only way to avoid a collision is with a quick turn.

The trick to making a quick turn is to get the motorcycle to lean quickly in the direction you wish to turn. To get the motorcycle to lean quickly, counter steer. (Counter-steering means steering one

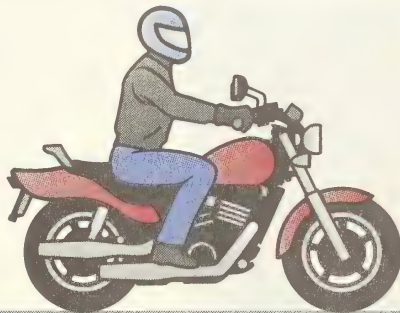
way to sent the bike in the opposite direction.) If you wish to turn right, push on the right hand grip. This will cause the front wheel to move slightly left. The result is a lean to the right.

As the motorcycle begins to lean, you now can turn the handlebars in the direction it is leaning to keep from falling over.

RIDING OVER OBSTACLES

Sometimes you have no choice but to ride over an object that is seen too late to steer around. In this type of situation, the basic rules to follow are:

- Maintain a relaxed but firm grip on the handlebars.
- Keep a straight course.
- Stand slightly on the foot pegs.
- Shift your weight back.



- Accelerate slightly as the front wheel reaches the object.
- Slow down and move forward as you go over the object.
- Resume your normal seating position and speed.

SUDDEN STOPS

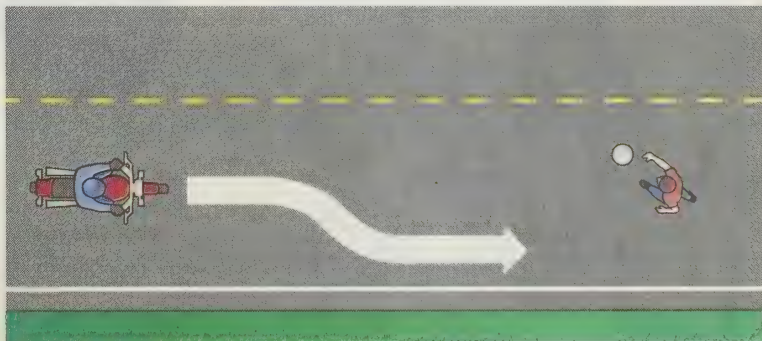
If you have to stop quickly:

- Keep the bike upright and in a straight line with the handlebars straight.
 - Apply each brake as hard as you can without locking either wheel.
1. Check your mirrors. If someone is close behind, try to keep moving (if you can) so that you won't be hit from the rear.
 2. You may be able to swing to the right if conditions permit. Do not brake while swerving.
 3. Weight shifts forward when you brake, and the front brake is especially powerful. Use it well, but respect it. About 75% of effective braking capacity is in the front brake.

- If the wheel locks up and skids, it may slide to one side making the bike hard to control.
- If you are forced to brake when the front wheel is turned, do it gradually. Give more emphasis on the back brake.

You need to practice to know how hard you can brake without locking the wheels and skidding:

- In an emergency situation, use both brakes to the maximum. Even though this may lock up your wheels, you might have no other choice.
- Remember, if you take your feet off the pegs for balance, only your front brake remains on.

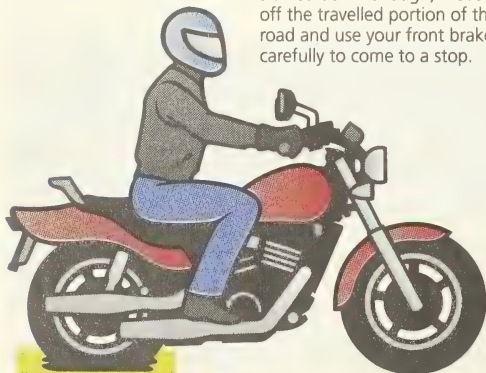


BLOWOUTS

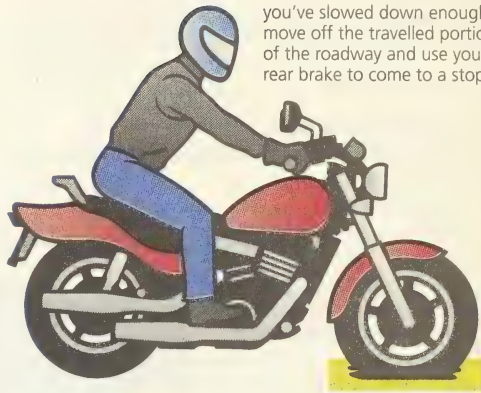
If you have a blowout, you will need to react quickly to keep your balance. You cannot always hear a tire blow but you should be able to detect a flat tire from the way the motorcycle reacts. A front wheel blowout is more dangerous since it affects your steering. If the front tire goes flat, the steering will feel heavy. If the rear tire goes flat, the back of the bike will tend to sway from side to side.

If the rear tire blows, maintain your position on the bike.

Don't brake. Ease off the throttle instead. When you've slowed down enough, move off the travelled portion of the road and use your front brake carefully to come to a stop.



If the front tire blows, hold on firmly and try to steer straight and shift your weight to the rear. Again, don't brake but ease off the throttle. When you've slowed down enough, move off the travelled portion of the roadway and use your rear brake to come to a stop.



STUCK THROTTLE

A stuck throttle requires quick thinking.

- If the throttle is wide open, use the engine stop switch and clutch together, followed by the brakes.
- If it is stuck at a normal operating speed, look for a safe place to stop, signal your intention, move to the safe place before using your engine stop switch and clutch together. Then apply your brakes.

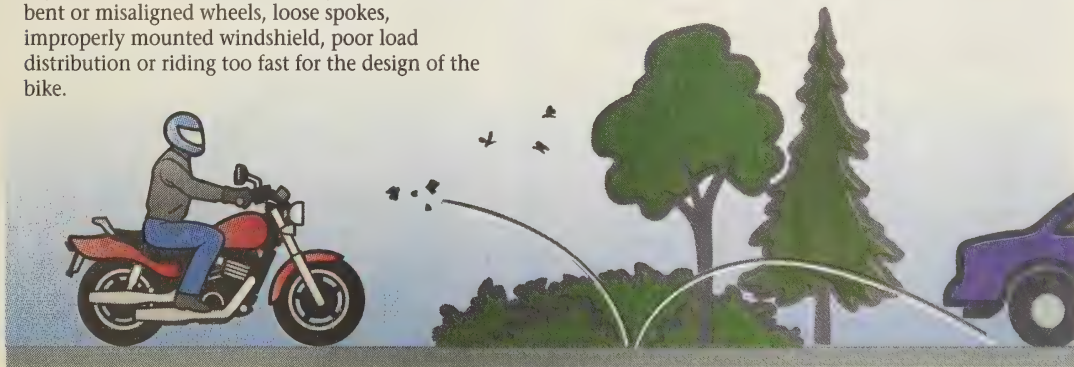
WOBBLE

When travelling at fairly high speeds, the front wheel can suddenly start to wobble or shake from side to side. The only thing you can do in this situation is to ride it out.

- Don't brake.
- Grip the handlebars firmly but don't try to stop the wobble.
- Gradually close the throttle and pull off the travelled portion of the road as soon as you can.
- Trying to accelerate out of a wobble will only make the problem worse.
- Typical causes of wobble are unequal tire pressure, bent or misaligned wheels, loose spokes, improperly mounted windshield, poor load distribution or riding too fast for the design of the bike.

FLYING OBJECTS

A motorcycle rider is subject to being struck by such things as insects, or stones thrown by other vehicles. The results, assuming you are not wearing any face protection, can range from obscured vision to severe pain and temporary vision loss. Whatever happens, concentrate on controlling your bike and staying on the road. As soon as it is safe, pull off the travelled portion of the road and fix the problem. Never try to fix the problem while you are in traffic. You will need both hands and all of your concentration to handle either problem. It is best to do only one thing at a time.



CHAPTER 9 Summary of Riding Tips

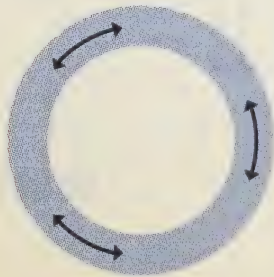
- Learn to operate a motorcycle properly. Seek professional driver training.
- A large number of motorcycle collisions happen to drivers with just a few months of operating experience. Get your experience under the best conditions and in light traffic.
- A motorcyclist is subject to the same rules of the road that apply to other motorists.
- The headlight on your bike must be on at all times when riding.
- Over-braking one or both wheels is one of the most common causes of skidding. If the front wheel locks, release the front brake immediately. If you lock the rear wheel, keep it locked. If the skid is because of over-acceleration, ease up on the throttle. Steer slightly in the direction you want the front to go.
- Watch for loose sand, gravel or spilled fluids on paved streets. This could be dangerous, causing loss of control. Slow down and grip the handlebars securely.
- Maintain your position in your lane. Do not cut in and out of traffic. Maintain a proper following distance by using the two-second rule.
- Always take a quick look over your shoulder before changing lanes.
- Use your eyes and your mirrors. Know where other drivers are and what they are doing.
- Always signal your intentions well in advance.
- While in motion, your knees should be against the gas tank.
- Do not overload your bike. Check your owner's manual for guidelines.
- Protect yourself from the weather. Dress properly and use an approved helmet for the driver and the passenger.
- A windshield, goggles or a face-shield provide protection and are worth the cost.
- Don't ride too long in a day. Take frequent rest stops. Stretching exercises before you ride and during rest stops will help keep you fresh.
- Be visible and drive defensively. Drive as if other drivers cannot see you.
- When riding during a strong side wind, be alert for a sudden change in wind strength.

- Avoid riding if possible when the road conditions are icy, wet or slippery.
- Look and plan ahead. Don't be caught by surprise.
- Use a tire pressure gauge daily. Keep the tires at the pressure recommended by the manufacturer of your bike. Check when the tires are cold.

COMPLETE ALBERTA MOTORCYCLE ON-LOT SKILL TEST



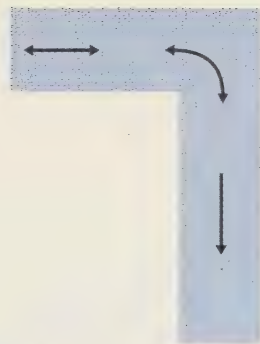
A. Serpentine



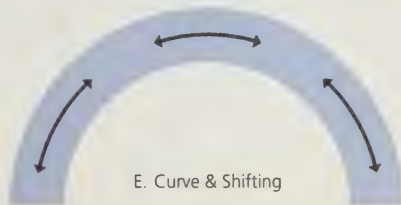
B. Circle



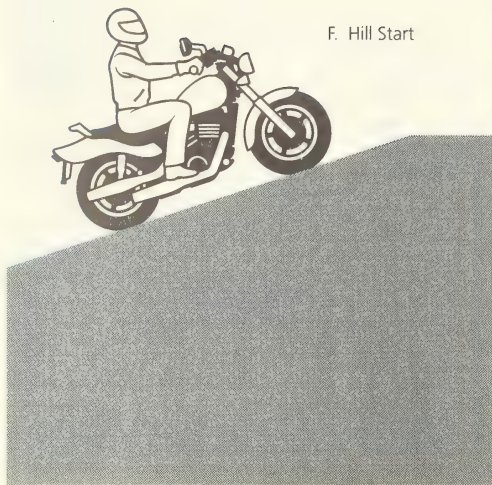
C. Balance



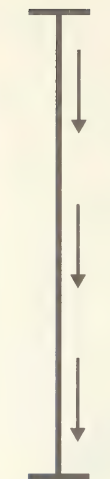
D. Left/Right Turns
& Shifting



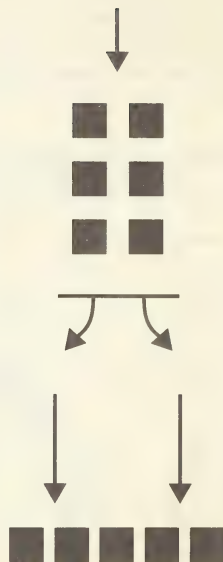
E. Curve & Shifting



F. Hill Start



G. Brake Test



H. Collision Avoidance

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